



**Consult, innovate & connect**

## **Activities of the UvA Green Office: January 2018–July 2018**

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# Introduction

The UvA Green Office is a student-run and student-led organisation based on the Green Office Model created by RootAbility. The mission of the UvA Green Office is to help turn the University of Amsterdam into a sustainable university and in doing so inspiring students and staff members to implement sustainability in their daily lives and environment. The UvA Green Office has been working on this mission using a threefold approach:

- ✓ Consulting staff members and students on how to implement sustainability at the university and in their daily lives.
- ✓ Introducing, supporting and implementing innovative sustainability concepts and ideas.
- ✓ Creating sustainable communities by connecting students and staff members from all departments with each other and sustainability organisations.

The projects of the UvA Green Office involve all aspects of the university. Firstly, the Green Office implements sustainability in the facilities of the university. This includes waste management, the catering and energy.

Secondly, the UvA Green Office engages with the different communities at the university and works with them to implement sustainability there. By doing so, the Green Office also creates and supports the sustainability community at the university.

The Green Office also works on bringing sustainability in education. This involves both the sustainability in the current curriculum, but also hosting lectures and symposia about sustainability to spread knowledge and awareness.

Finally, the UvA Green Office works on the sustainability of the research conducted at the university. It does so through supporting researchers working on sustainability issues and helping them to spread knowledge of what they have been working on.

This document provides an overview of all activities of the UvA Green Office from January 2018 to July 2018 (roughly the second semester of the academic year). These activities include the many projects and events, but also the networks which have been established, the new structure of the Green Office and the ambitions and expected changes for the next semester (after the summer holidays).

If you, the reader, have any comments, suggestions or feedback, please do not hesitate to send an email to [greenoffice@uva.nl](mailto:greenoffice@uva.nl).

Interested in the activities of the Green Office in 2017? Visit: [www.uvagreenoffice.nl](http://www.uvagreenoffice.nl).

# Organisation and structure

## Roles

The UvA Green Office is more or less based on the RootAbility Green Office model, with some adaptations to increase its functioning within the university and allotted budget. The UvA Green Office has four levels in its organisational structure, each performing its own crucial role in achieving our goals. These layers are visualised in the image to the right (figure 1).

### Supervisors

The supervisors are the link between the UvA Green Office and the University of Amsterdam. The supervisors support the Green Office wherever needed and make sure the Green Office performs optimally and sufficiently within the university. The current supervisor is Ewout Doorman.

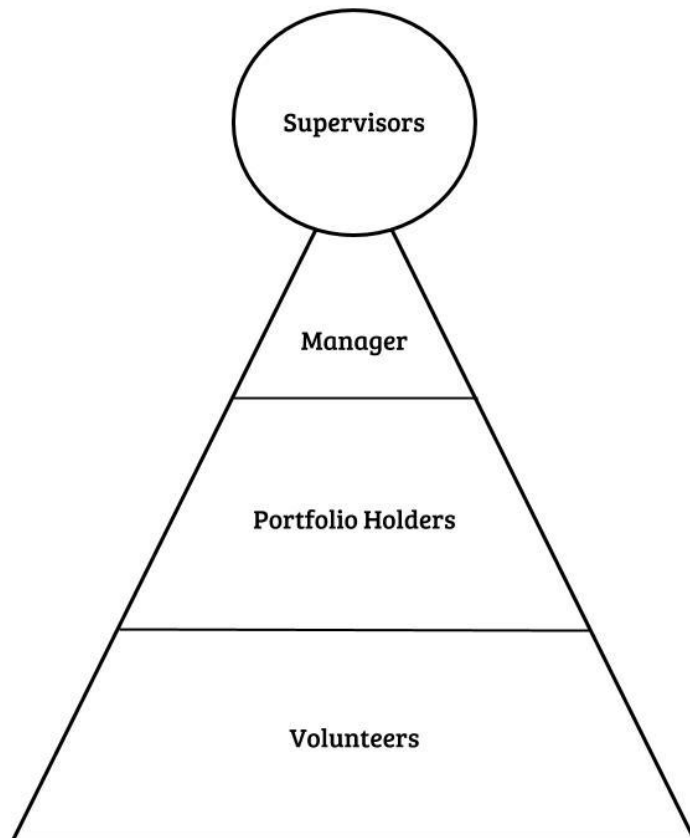


Figure 1: The organisational structure of the UvA Green Office

### Manager

The manager is responsible for all the actions of the members of the UvA Green Office and has to make sure everything goes according to plan. In order to achieve this, the manager determines the general strategy of the Green Office. In addition, the manager monitors the progress of the current projects and the work of the Portfolio Holders. The manager also decides on the expenses so that the allotted budget is use optimally.

### Portfolio Holders

Portfolio holders are an essential part of the Green Office as they are responsible for research and execution of projects. Each of the four portfolio holders are assigned to one of the four pillars. Their tasks consist of developing project plans, providing funding and contacts and managing the volunteers. In addition, they should motivate volunteers by

organising social events and provide opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, for example through workshops.

## Volunteers

The Green Office has volunteers consisting of both students and staff. The volunteers work on the completion of projects or can create a project themselves to be proposed to the green office and supervisory board. The volunteers are connected with one or more projects and are assisted and overseen by the Portfolio Holders.

## Portfolios

The Green Office works with different teams (Portfolios of volunteers, managed by Portfolio Holders). Each team has its own focus and addresses a different part of the sustainability issue within the university. A description of each Portfolio can be found below.

### Campus

The Portfolio Holder Campus is tasked with improving the sustainability of the buildings and facilities at the university. This includes topics such as waste separation, catering and energy. This work mainly occurs in cooperation with Facility Services and companies the UvA has a contract with (waste, catering etc.).

### Community

It is the task of Portfolio Holder Community to engage the students and staff members at the UvA to promote sustainable behaviour and spread knowledge concerning sustainability. This means organising challenges and events, but also working closely together with the other Portfolio Holders (Campus, Research & Education and Communications). The Community Portfolio Holder and his/her team must assist them with organising events and the promotion of ongoing and finished projects of both the Green Office and the university.

### Research & Education

The Portfolio Holder Research & Education is engaged with promoting sustainability in research and education at the university. This means both engaging students and researchers, but also providing a platform for current initiatives. His/her activities therefore include organising symposia and the GreenTalks.

### Communications

The Communications Portfolio Holder is responsible for communicating the achievements and activities of the UvA Green Office. This mainly done through social media, but also by making sure that the communication during events occurs properly and that all communication lives up to certain standards.

# Projects

## Campus

### Renewi excursion

In order to get a better insight into how the waste of the university is being processed at this moment, the UvA Green Office organised an excursion to the waste processing plant of Renewi together with Facility Services on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. During this trip, Renewi explained what happens with the different waste streams and which issues they are still facing when it comes to recycling the different materials.

Renewi explained that many materials are already effectively recycled, such as paper and glass. However, the company cannot claim the same for plastic. The plastic waste stream is often too polluted to recycle to a high grade plastic. In addition, there are so many types of plastic (combined in single products) that separating them is rather difficult. Much of the plastic waste used to be shipped to China for manual separation, but since that is no longer possible much of the plastic is stored and/or incinerated.



Figure 2: photo from the Renewi excursion made by Dante della Gatta (2018).

## Waste separation

Waste separation has been identified by the UvA Green Office as one of the main sustainability issues concerning the operational management of the university. The Green Office has identified three aspects of the waste separation issue:

- **Facilities:** the Green Office has received many comments and emails from students and staff members who are willing to separate their waste, but that the UvA does not have separate bins for the different waste streams installed everywhere. The UvA has increased the number of separated bins, notably at Science Park and at all of the catering locations. In addition, the Roeterseilandcampus already has separate bins almost everywhere. The UvA Green Office is currently in the process of organising meetings with all necessary parties with the end goal of creating a single waste separation policy.
- **Knowledge:** separating the waste has not always been successful because waste still ends up in the wrong bins. When talking to students and staff members about this issue, it turns out that many find the current system confusing, mainly because for some products it is unclear in which bin they belong. The UvA Green is currently investigating what needs to be done to make it more clear. The Renewi excursion and the Course attitude change (see below) are examples of this effort.
- **Waste processing:** Several waste streams are already being recycled effectively, such as paper and glass. However, plastic is still an issue. During the Renewi excursion it became clear that plastic is currently stored and/or incinerated. After reaching this conclusion, the Green Office is now looking for innovative solutions.



Figure 3: one of the waste separation hubs at Science Park.

## Course attitude change

This project was a collaboration between Facility Services, the Green Office and Giel Dik, who teaches the course *'Ontwikkelen en evalueren van interventies'* (in English: *'Creation and evaluation of interventions'*). The goal of this collaboration was to think of a solution for the waste separation problem: student are not separating their waste properly at the moment. The course is part of a social psychology master. Students were asked to think of



interventions based on literature. The problem was presented by the Green Office and Facility Service on the first of November 2017. After six weeks, they presented several possible solutions to the Green Office and Facility Services. The Green Office and Facility Services are currently in the process of investigating the possibilities for successful implementation of these solutions.

### Plastic shoelaces

As part of a course on developing a business, groups of students have developed a business plan, which they consequently implemented. One of these plans is to produce shoe laces from plastic waste. The idea is to use plastic waste from the university (which is possible due to the new separation of waste streams). As most of the plastic waste is currently not being recycled, this would be a great addition to the waste processing at the university.

As it turns out, it is unfortunately not possible to use UvA waste to create plastic shoelaces. There are several reasons, but the main issue is that a specific type of plastic was needed. This means that the plastic waste from the university would have to be cleaned and separated, which is currently not a possibility for the students.

### Coffee cups

A large amount of disposable coffee cups are used at the UvA each day. This causes a lot of waste, which seems unnecessary. The UvA Green Office has therefore investigated the possibilities for introducing sustainable and reusable coffee cups. Currently, such reusable cups are being sold by the catering company. The UvA Green Office is currently discussing the possibilities to incentivise their usage by students and staff members. An example of a possible solution is a discount for everyone who brings their own refillable cup. In addition, reusable cups might be handed out to new students during the Intreeweek.

### Pen recycling

The Pen Recycling project is in collaboration with TerraCycle in which used writing utensils such as pens, highlighters, and markers are disposed of at collection points on UvA campuses. These collection points are to be emptied once a month and the writing utensils mailed to TerraCycle. There are currently four collection points: one at Science Park, one at Oudemanshuispoort and two at the Roeterseilandcampus.

Since January, all of the collection points have been emptied at least once and the Green Office has sent over 20 kilograms of pens to Terracycle.



Figure 4: sending over 20 kilograms of old pens to Terracycle. Photo made by Dante della Gatta (2018).

## Mobility II

A plan has been developed to build a smart mobility app for the Science Park campus. The idea is that through this app, it will be easier for students and staff members to commute to and from the university and to do so in a more sustainable way.

There are two options for developing such an app: to create a challenge for students for this app and basing the app on the app that the AMC/VUMC uses. It should combine all forms of mobility available on Science Park, probably for all target audiences (entrepreneurs, students, other businesses). The Green Office will help to explore the needs of students and possibilities of this group for the app and is currently involved with investigating if such an app would be used by the students and staff members and what kind of functionalities would be convenient.

## Fresh Bags

The Fresh Bag is a concept in which local organic fruits and vegetables are sold to students and staff members. The Green Office was approached by two students who wanted to implement this concept at Science Park. For the Fresh Bag at UvA, the vegetables are bought from local organic farmers and sold for the purchase price to students and staff. It is an inexpensive, sustainable and easy way to get your vegetables. The Fresh Bag has started in September, and is a success so far. On average, they sell 30 bags per week. The main role of the Green Office was to facilitate the students in developing their plan by giving advice and providing contact information.

Since January, the Green Office has helped FreshBag to gain new volunteers and board members and to advertise their product more effectively. In addition, the Green Office has discussed the possibilities of branching out to other UvA locations. This will most likely occur next year, with the support of the Green Office.

## Rainwater

The roofs of the UvA have great unused potential. The idea of the rainwater project is to look at all buildings of the UvA and the HvA to see if the rainwater can be used more sustainably. This includes the possibility of installing green roofs, implementing water retention and storage and grey water circuits. If successful, the project can help with the heat island effect, increase heat isolation and the overall water usage efficiency.

# Community

## Binnenstadscampus

The UvA is renovating a large part of the Binnenstadcampus. While promises were made to do this in a sustainable way, what is actually being done is quite unclear. The UvA Green Office has therefore reached out to the department responsible for developing the new Binnenstadcampus. This project has two goals:

- To spread knowledge of what is currently going on and what role sustainability plays in the renovations.
- To check the plans for implementing sustainability and help improve them however possible.

## Sustainability taskforce

Several UvA employees decided to form sustainability taskforce and invited the UvA Green Office to participate. Together with these employees, the Green Office organised several meetings and brainstorm sessions. The main results was that sustainability was not sufficiently embedded in the structure of the university. In order to solve this issue, a solution was designed involving the next strategic plan and a standard sustainability taskforce. After discussing the issue with Jan Lintsen (member of the board of directors), it was decided that the Green Office will be involved in including a sustainability section in the next strategic plan.

The sustainability taskforce will be organising new brainstorm sessions next academic year in order to tackle other sustainability issues.

## LINK

LINK is one of the first projects started by the Green UvA Platform (see the 'Other' section). The Green Office participates in this projects and is one of the main organisers. The projects entails organising events where groups of students can brainstorm to find solutions for issues local sustainability organisations are facing. This means that the participating students will come into contact with these local initiatives. The events will help the initiatives through the designed solutions and the ability to engage with students. This enables the students to learn about these local initiatives and might inspire them to continue working with these organisations, either as a volunteer or through an internship. The first event will take place in October.

## Intreeweek

The UvA Green Office has been working together with the Intreeweek committee to improve the sustainability of the Intreeweek. Coming Intreeweek the Green Office will mainly contribute through own initiatives (for example at the stand at the Passenger Terminal or

the DIS 2018 (see below)). In addition, the Green Office will be advising the Intreeweek committee when organising the Intreeweek for 2019.

### **Sustainability vision CSR**

The Central Student Council has decided to create a general vision document concerning sustainability for the university. This will include guidelines and goals. The UvA Green Office has been invited to provide input and partake in the discussion concerning the writing of such a document.

### **Sustainable measures**

The UvA already does a lot when it comes to sustainability, but this is not always well advertised. The aim of this project is to create an overview of all the sustainability measures the university has already implemented. This way, students and staff members will be better informed about the progress the university has made, which allows for improved and more concrete input.

### **DIS 2018**

The DIS (Duurzame Introductie Stunt) is a competition organised by Studenten voor Morgen. All member organisations can participate. The goal of the competition is to create the most sustainable initiative during the initiation period of new students (Intreeweek). The Green Office will participate in the competition. A clear plan will be created during the summer holidays.

### Sustainable fashion event

The Green Office has organised an event concerning sustainable fashion on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April. The event brought individuals from different areas of the sustainable fashion in to tell their story and their vision on sustainable fashion. They were able to engage with each other and the public and sketch possible sustainable futures of fashion. The speakers for the event were Chanel Trapman (the founder of the conscious fashion platform MUMSTER), Eva van der Brugge (from the sustainable fashion organisation Fashion for Good) and Doug Mignola (from sustainable fashion brand HoodLamb).



Figure 5: a speaker of the sustainable fashion event. Photo made by Dante della Gatta (2018).

### Food event

After the sustainable fashion event, the UvA Green Office also organised a sustainable food event, with a focus on urban food production. Four speakers were invited, who each provided a separate perspective on sustainable urban food production. The speakers were: Frank Bakkum, Jan-Eelco Jansma, Arnold van der Valk and Michiel Korthals.



*Figure 6: the speakers of the Urban Food Symposium.*

### Honours course

The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has the honours course Designing Innovations for Sustainability. During this course, students will develop solutions for actual sustainability issues at their university. Until now, this included only cases from the Vrije Universiteit. Together with the coordinators of the course, the UvA Green Office will also offer cases from the University of Amsterdam.

### Rebranding

In order to be more effective in communicating its mission and achievements, the UvA Green Office went through a rebranding process. A new logo was designed, together with new promotional material. The three words: consult, innovate and connect are printed on all promotional material to clearly communicate how the Green Office tries to reach its goals.

The website of the Green Office also got an update and the blog series as revived in order to provide an insight into the projects of the Green Office and what it has achieved.



*Figure 7: the new logo of the UvA Green Office.*



## Multiple platforms

In order to reach a wider audience, the UvA Green Office has expanded its communication to other platforms than Facebook. One of these platforms is Instagram, which the Green Office uses to share events, updates, photos and stories. In addition to Instagram, the UvA Green Office has also created a page for LinkedIn. This allows its members to mention the UvA Green Office as an organisation are working for or have worked for.

## Blog series

The communications director of the UvA Green Office has also started a new series of blogs, posted on the website and shared on the different social media platforms. The new blog series has the activities and team of the UvA Green Office as its main theme. Each blog post is about one of the Portfolio Holders and an interesting project they are working on.

## New communications strategy

In order to be more effective at communicating its goals and activities, the UvA Green Office has adapted a new communications strategy. The Green Office no longer shares a lot of content from other organisations, but instead posts mainly about its own activities and achievements and activities and achievements of the university and/or its students and staff members. This means that the UvA Green Office has shifted from a 'nexus' model of communication, where the Green Office functions as a node for general sustainability content, to a 'rainbow' model, which means that Green Office content is prioritised (Figure 8). The Green UvA Platform has adopted the role of sharing general sustainability content concerning the UvA and beyond.

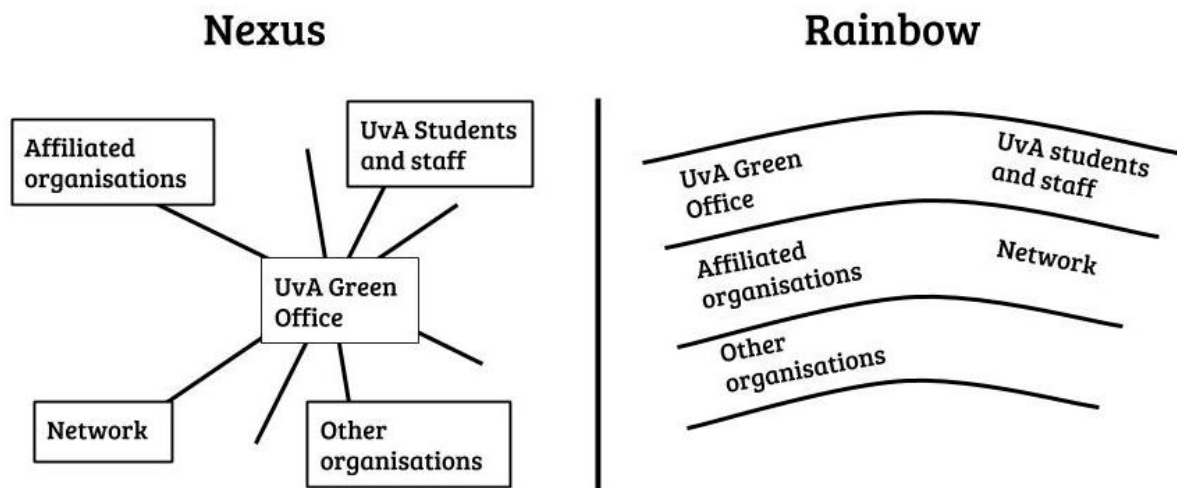


Figure 8: Two different communication strategies.

## Green Office Partnership Amsterdam (GOPA)

There are currently three Green Office in Amsterdam: the UvA Green Office, the Green Office of the VU and the Green Office of the Municipality of Amsterdam. Since January, the UvA Green Office has started cooperating with these other two Green Offices through the Green Office Partnership Amsterdam. The idea of this partnership is to exchange ideas and expertise and to achieve common goals together. This will be achieved through monthly meetings and social events where the Green Offices discuss their activities and events which are organised together, such as excursions to sustainable locations/organisation in Amsterdam. If a Green Office is set up at the HvA, it will also join this partnership.

## Sustainabul

The Sustainabul is the main sustainability competition for institutions of higher education in the Netherlands. Each year, the organisation Studenten voor Morgen launches the new version and distributes an extensive list of questions about the sustainability of the different aspects of higher education. The UvA Green Office filled out a large part of this list of questions.

## Uitslag SustainaBul 2018

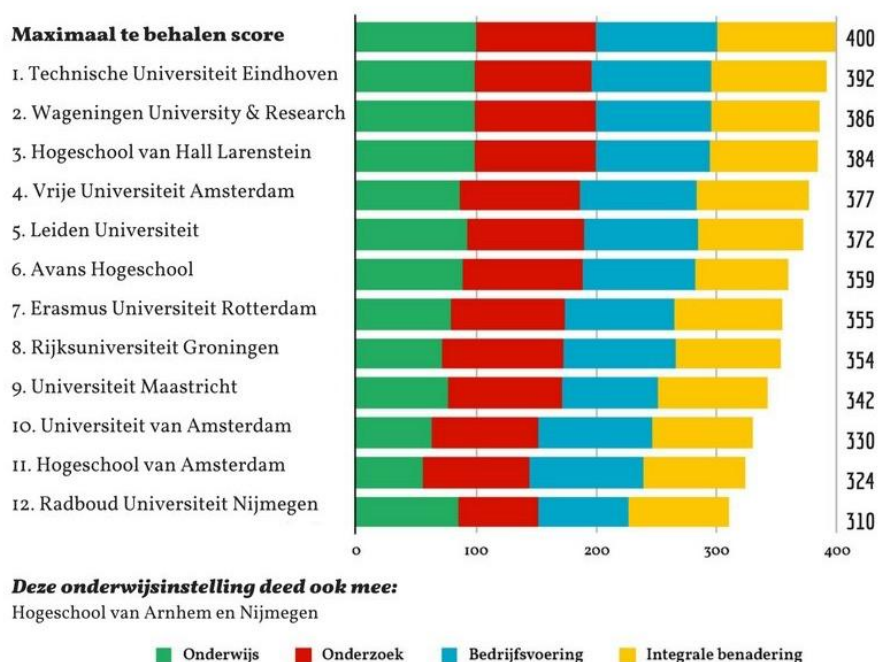


Figure 8: the result of the Sustainabul 2018. The graph was created by Studenten voor Morgen (2018).

## Green UvA Platform

The Green UvA Platform is an organisation created by the UvA Green Office, SFSA and Fossil Free UvA/HvA. The main idea was to create one sustainability community and to provide students and staff members easy opportunities to follow the developments concerning sustainability at the UvA and to meet the different sustainability organisations. This is being achieved through social media, monthly meetings and drinks. In addition, the Green UvA Platform will also start several projects in the new academic year (see DIS 2018 and LINK).

## WarmeTruienDag

The WarmeTruienDag is a day where participating organisations turn down the heating in order to save energy and spread awareness about the energy usage of heating and cooling systems. The UvA participated by turning down the heating at Science Park. In order to spread awareness (and to provide some comfort), the UvA Green Office handed out hot drinks together with SFSA and explained why the heating was turned down.



*Figure 9: the stand at Science Park during the WarmeTruienDag event.*

# Future projects

## Campus

- Pen recycling: the pen bins are a great success and expansion is therefore a good idea. The Green Office therefore aims at installing pen recycling bins at all major locations before 2019.
- Fresh bags: the sale of the Fresh Bags at Science Park is going rather well. The Green Office therefore wants to expand this initiative to other campuses before 2019 in cooperation with the current FreshBag team.
- Waste separation: the discussion concerning waste separation are still going on and will continue. The Green Office aims to find effective solutions for the plastic recycling issues and increase the efficiency of waste separation by informing students and staff members, redesigning the waste posters and increasing the number of separated bins on all locations.
- Coffee cups: the Green Office aims at reducing the amount of disposable coffee cups used at the university. Currently, sustainable reusable cups can be bought, but the Green Office thinks this should be incentivised more.
- Rainwater: the Rainwater project has only just begun and the project will therefore continue for a while.
- Mobility II: the second mobility project is still in the orientation phase. This means that there will still be a lot of work to be done.

## Community

- Intreeweek: at the start of the academic year there will be the Intreeweek. The first priority of the Green Office when it comes to the Community part is therefore to successfully finish the DIS 2018 and recruit as many new volunteers as possible.
- Sustainability taskforce: the sustainability taskforce will continue and new goals will have to be set. The Green Office will stay involved and contribute in whichever way possible.
- LINK: the Green Office will play an important role in organising the events related to the LINK project. As the first event will be in October, this will be one of the main priorities at the start of the academic year.
- Outreach: the Community Portfolio Holder will start a new outreach campaign as part of the effort to get all UvA students and staff familiar with the UvA Green Office and its activities.

## Research & Education

- GreenTalks/Symposia: The Green Office has three more sustainable events planned before January 2019. These events are about:
  - The psychology of sustainable behaviour.
  - Sustainable transport.
  - The role of crypto currency in creating a sustainable future.
- Honours course: the honours course Designing Innovations for Sustainability will also include cases from the University of Amsterdam and the Green Office will therefore have to be involved in finding and presenting these cases.
- Sustainable curriculum: the Green Office has a list of sustainable courses. This needs to be updated.
- Sustainable research: quite a lot of research at the University of Amsterdam involves sustainability. In order to show this to all the students and staff members, the Green Office will create an inventory of all the current sustainability research at the university.